PROPOSAL FOR THE

RAPID TRANSMITTAL OF INFORMATION REPORTS AND CUSTOMER REACTIONS

(NOTE: This is an abbreviated version of the complete 32-page proposal; it was prepared for DD/I use.)

The Problem

The problem faced by the Agency Planning Group in the routine intelligence field comes under three headings:

a. Speed of processing, taking advantage of new technology;

b. Quality of reporting, dismissing submarginal information -- and sources -- at the earliest possible stage;

c. Tailor-made dissemination to keep analysts from being flooded with materials not pertinent to their work.

These facets are interrelated. Processing delays in getting reports to customers breed additional delays in getting reactions and evaluations to the collectors. The half-life of information is short; loss of interest in it due to time lag produces lack of interest in improving the source's production.

If we are able significantly to cut the number of processing steps and their aggregate time, users will better recognize their own interest in furnishing feedback to the collector. Collectors will appreciate this timely interest in their operations; and case officers and sources alike will be encouraged by the speed with which their material was handled, and the interest Washington has taken in it.

Speed and quality are particularly closely interwoven in the field of marginal or submarginal reporting. If users can let the collector

know quickly that certain materials are valueless, operations can be effectively re-directed or stopped, freeing field manpower for more constructive enterprises. If the discovery of lack of value is delayed, or not communicated, operations go on indefinitely, producing nothing, and the Agency's best asset, its professional manpower, remains tied up in them.

In late 1958 the DCI appointed a planning group, representing all elements of the Agency concerned, to recommend a communications and reporting system for CIA which would result in a speedier and more efficient flow of reports to the using analysts. The proposal below has been developed by members of this planning group. It is designed to cover a fairly limited number of CIA reports in the early stages of its operations. It is also designed, however, to be expanded to cover a larger percentage of CIA reports and possibly even the reports of other intelligence agencies if operating experience proves that these steps may be desirable.

The Need for a More Expeditious System of Reporting

As a result of recommendations made by the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities (the Hull Committee), the President has directed the intelligence community to establish a system for the reporting of critical intelligence within speeds approaching ten minutes. [redacted] system has been designed to meet this specific task. In devising [redacted] system, however, the Critical Communications Committee advanced, and the USIB approved, the view that for any system of reporting of critical intelligence to achieve maximum efficiency,

25X1A2g

25X1A2gRDP62-00680R000100230003-0

it was essential that there be an increased flow of more timely background data against which to assess items of critical intelligence.

In view of the emerging capability of the Soviet Union in the field of guided missiles and the general speed-up in the field of weapons and communications, the DD/I has set as a goal the establishment of a reporting system in the intelligence community which will get substantially all intelligence information to the analyst within twenty-four hours after the preparation of the report in the field. Communications and other mechanical techniques are sufficiently advanced to make this a feasible goal.

Before developing a system that can include the reporting of the entire intelligence community, it is necessary that CIA develop a system for its own reporting that will move toward the achievement of the twenty-four hour goal. The experience gained and the techniques devised in the development of this internal system might well provide the basis for a rapid system encompassing the remainder of the intelligence community.

At the present time information is received by intelligence analysts over an extended period of time after the event being reported. Some information is received in a matter of hours or days from the FBIS and the cabled reports of other reporting agencies, including the Clandestine Services of CIA. The bulk of the information, however, is received in dispatch or report form over several weeks or months following. For example, Clandestine Services pouched reports, according to a recent two-day sample, reach the analysts' desks on an average of 54 days after

their acquisition in the field. A schematic chart of the present and the desired patterns of the receipt of reports by analysts follows.

Synopsis of the Proposal

25X1A2g

The cycle of the proposed system consists of the following elements:

a. Reports are typed at the field station [redacted] on a Flexowriter with a tape by-product.

b. After mechanical encrypting, tape is forwarded to Headquarters by unaccompanied pouch or, as KW-26 equipment becomes available, by electrical means.

c. After mechanical decrypting at the Headquarters Signal Center, clear text tape is furnished the Cable Secretariat.

25X1A2gpd. On a twin of the input Flexowriter, the clear text tape is automatically typed [redacted], and carbons furnished to the action desk.

e. An OCR document analyst assigned to the Cable Secretariat places appropriate ISC codes on the mat, together with an indication of the dissemination normally accomplished by OCR. Simultaneously, the action desk reviews its copies, adding appropriate release and dissemination instructions and making minor corrections. A completed copy is returned to the Cable Secretariat.

25X1A2g

f. The fully ISC coded, released, corrected, and [redacted] is then run off for external and internal distribution by messenger or electrical transmission.

g. Initial Reaction Sheets (see Attachment A) are filled in by analysts with substantive interests, and returned within three working days to OCR.

h. The Machine Branch of OCR processes incoming Initial Reaction Sheets on punched cards. Lists of Requirements are processed in the same manner. Reproduced decks of these cards go to the Machine Branch of RID, DD/P.

i. OCR furnishes DD/I internal dissemination and document processing offices with appropriately organized tabulations of analysts' reactions to disseminations they have received (Question 1), and lists of ISC coding proposed by analysts which was not foreseen in the initial coding process (Question 8).

j. Meantime, the Machine Branch in the CS has punched cards of other information, such as report numbers, projects, sources, originating stations, appraisal, subject, etc. Upon receipt of the cards made from Initial Reaction Sheets, it processes these for transmission of specifically pertinent tabulations by pouch or teletape to the field, with copies to the desks and Staffs concerned.

A pilot model of this system can be promptly established with the [redacted] Based on experience with this model, the whole system can then be adapted for use elsewhere and particular features spread out to cover CS reporting across the board. The issue of whether and how to apply the system to customers in other Agencies can then be worked on piecemeal.

There is no mechanical reason why the full cycle of reporting to the customer, and return of initial customer reactions to the field, need take longer than ten working days, if unaccompanied pouch is used, and less if tape is transmitted by electrical means.

The Initial Reaction Sheet

While the form is self-explanatory, several points should be made in support of it.

Every department of the Agency has experienced a steady increase in business, volume of paper, operational activity, number of reports, number of cable groups transmitted, etc., every year. There appears to be a steady annual growth of between 10 and 15%. It is the result of 15 years of preparatory work now giving us, in volume if not in quality, increasingly the product we have sought. On the other hand, we have reached our peak in manpower.

Sooner or later this conflict will cease to be merely annoying. Most of us plead that we are so overloaded that we cannot take on another piece of paper or another form. Individual components strive valiantly to improve the effectiveness of their use of manpower by regulating themselves a little better in one respect or another, but the paper flood does not diminish.

The fact is that all elements in the reporting business, from procurement through analysis, are parts of a single whole. Once the most serious problems facing each of the components are viewed, not as their exclusive, individual concern but as aspects of a single large problem, then new solutions offer themselves which may tend to be simpler and more effective. We refer to [redacted] "The 25X1A9a Guiding of Intelligence Collection," Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 3, No. 1, for other aspects of the same issue.

Let us have the courage to face the analyst -- to begin with

within the Agency -- with another form. The payoff will be worth it. Three aspects of the reporting problem are combined in it: those of appropriately limited dissemination, of adequate ISC coding for later retrieval, and of a quick expression of interest to assist the collector.

Only those analysts should be asked to use the form whose "feedback" will be worth exploiting, i.e. the specialists concerned with the subject matter reported; those responsible for writing collection requirements; those whose work will suffer if information is not adequately retrievable for lack of coding. It stands to reason that their cooperation will be quickly rewarded by receipt of fewer reports which are of no interest to them; by retrieval of filed materials they need in research; by more direct and effective contact with the collectors, triggered by their responses on the IRS.

The analyst has more important business than to fill in forms; hence the form must be simple, and easy to use and mail. We might provide participating analysts with blank forms, and pre-addressed envelopes containing identifying pre-punched cards, to make processing easy at all stages.

Punched-card processing of filled-in IRS forms should be used for all reporting derived from it. This will allow us to use the form in a single copy never requiring manual sorting and distribution. All derived products take the form of tailor-made machine tabulations.

The form as it appears in the attachment, although finished in appearance, is merely a draft for discussion and further refinement.

Feedback for Coders

Every theoretical discussion of retrieval problems brings out the inevitable human limitations in the coding process. For a recent review of this problem, see Paul A. Borel's article "On Processing Intelligence Information," Studies in Intelligence, Vol. 3, No. 1.

Analysts in the Document Division are not omniscient universal geniuses; they are able to assign the apparently essential codes, but they are bound to overlook, or not to be aware of, angles under which retrieval might in future become essential. This is the primary criticism of the present library system, leveled at it by personnel using it. The intelligence subject code, present or revised, is a splendid instrument, useful exactly to the point to which coders properly foresee the headings under which material may need to be recovered, but no further.

The better and more widely known the Intelligence Subject Code, the more it is directly used and contributed to by experts in their various fields, the better the retrieval system. The Initial Reaction Sheet provides a simple method of contributing to the coding. This presumes that the ISC codes originally assigned by document analysts are available on the report for review. Any analyst who receives a copy can take care of his own interests beyond the initial coding by adding appropriate codes on the form.

Mechanically, the additional entries will be referred to the Document Division in weekly tabulations. These will cite the name of each contributing analyst, the additional codes each has proposed, and the

report numbers to which these pertain. They can appear in document number or ISC Code order, or any other desired arrangement, for discussion with the proponents if this is indicated, and integration into the system.

Once this feedback process has been underway for some time, and analysts have become used to it, it is to be hoped that they will develop such confidence in the ability of the library -- particularly as mechanization provides increasingly reliable and rapid service -- to retrieve what they need, that they will be willing to dispense with the bulk of their own paper holdings. Without participation in the coding process, this confidence, we believe, cannot be established.

Feedback for Disseminators

Background Papers Nos. 1, 3 and 4, when read together, spell out another cause of delays in processing information reports to the ultimate Agency user: The method, now in use, of successive dissemination through organizational channels, with major distribution to the Office, from there to the Branch, from there to individuals. Bulk processing through several steps is inherently inefficient, when seen as a whole, not only in terms of time, but also in terms of the number of copies required which must be based on extreme potential needs, rather than specific known needs.

Alternatively, dissemination might be achieved within the Agency, from a central point directly to individual analysts, on the basis of their specific requirements, kept up-to-date on a continuing basis, by a feedback system suitable to mechanization.

Under such a system, dissemination can take place by subjects coded in the ISC, thus taking advantage of the fact that reports moved by the proposed reporting system will carry pertinent codes on every copy. Coded requirements, on the one hand, and coded reports on the other, are a prerequisite for any attempt to mechanize the routine portion of the dissemination process. (Unusual spot requirements would be handled outside the system.)

An analyst's Statement of Requirements may be derived in the first instance by tabulating his response to Question 1 of the Initial Reaction Sheet over a period of some months. The tabulation would contain all the reports he received, and their subjects in terms of the ISC code. Document analysts could translate this tabulation into a tentative Statement of Requirements, for refinement in discussion with the analyst concerned. This would yield the analyst's current Statement of Requirements on which disseminations to him would be based. This in turn would be kept up-to-date by the continuing feedback of his reactions on the IRS.

The experiment in automatic dissemination now underway in AFCIN-1 indicates that much additional paper is pumped into the mill by the straight-faced, undiscriminating machine. This is due to inadequately spelled out requirements which are adequately understood by trained analysts, but cause hash by machine. A feedback system as proposed here -- properly used -- will tend to give the analyst and his supervisor direct control over the volume of information delivered to the "In" basket.

The supervisor is an interested party in this process because of his responsibility for a proper workload distribution to his subordinates.

This, in practice, is a most difficult task; most supervisors carry their own workloads, and do not inspect their subordinates' "In" baskets at regular intervals. Based on the Initial Reaction Sheet, supervisors may receive every week, or at any other convenient interval, a tabulation by name of their subordinates of the reports they took in, and their reactions to them. This is a tool which might lend itself very well to proper workload distribution.

Effect on Substantive Evaluations

The amount of bookkeeping now undertaken in the CS to keep track of individual projects and their reporting product is very considerable. The scheme as outlined here does not encompass the present substantive evaluation process, the importance of which is in no way affected by it. In present experience, more than half of the rather elaborate Form 39 are returned by customer analysts with check marks only, and no substantive comments whatsoever. By diverting these to the IRS, and by freeing desk and Staff personnel of routine bookkeeping chores, it should be feasible to spend more time in personal or telephone contact with qualified analysts to obtain specific useful comments.

One novelty of this scheme, which is apt to meet with some apprehension in the CS, consists of the direct, uninhibited two-way communication between the recipients of information and its producers. An initial reaction to the product is sent right back without intervention at the Headquarters desk. This carries the risk that the field may act

independently on the feedback to stop or redirect a project, as the case may be, without being so directed by the Headquarters desk. There are two sides to this controversy: we would argue that the CS have personnel in the field so competent that we entrust them with the conduct of operations which sometimes carry considerable risk; we can rely on them to discriminate. Furthermore, the desk is in a position rapidly to add its comments to the material communicated to the field, since it receives a copy simultaneously.

Under the impetus of this system, it is to be hoped that substantive evaluations will be processed to the field with a speed approximating that of the Initial Reaction system. They now take on the order of six months to reach the field from the date of the original report. They are often valueless by that time. The reasons for these delays are for the most part mechanical and will be separately investigated and dealt with.